



Commonwealth of Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Environmental Quality Commission Recognizes Achievement of Kentuckians for Earth Day 2015

Frankfort, Ky. (April 10, 2015) – The Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission today presented its annual Earth Day awards to individuals and groups who have made significant contributions to environmental protection. This year's event took place at the Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort.

"It's an honor to recognize Kentuckians for their tireless efforts and unwavering advocacy to environmental protection," said Arnita Gadson, executive director of the Environmental Quality Commission. "This year's recipients are diverse and their efforts will have positive lasting effects in our state."

Recipients are as follows:

- **Safelite AutoGlass, Louisville**

Safelite AutoGlass, the nation's largest provider of vehicle glass repair and replacement, has a large recycling program. The company's Kentucky locations have recycled 43,227 windshields, saving more than 756 tons of waste, and recycled nearly 40 tons of cardboard in 2014. Their sustainability policy is to increase efficiency by reducing solid waste and wasted energy.

- **Newport Aquarium, Newport**

With more than 700,000 visitors annually, the Newport Aquarium has an opportunity to educate its guests about water and its role in daily life. With the "Water Story" project, the aquarium has developed a fun, relevant way to reach its audience and presents ways the public can get involved in conservation efforts.

- **Berea College Student EcoChallenge Team**

The Berea College Student EcoChallenge Team, a diverse group of 11 student volunteers, produced the first carbon-neutral green basketball in Kentucky. The group's goal is to increase awareness with those who would normally not be involved in such environmental efforts by involving various organizations on campus. Berea College placed first in the National Recyclemania (to increase recycling) and Campus Conservation National (to reduce energy consumption) competitions.

- **Deborah Payne, Berea**

Deborah Payne serves as project director of the Health Impact Assessment of Shawnee Fossil Plant. Her goal is to increase community dialogue around health as it connects to both the environment and the local economy. Her success was measured by the level of increased stakeholder involvement through open dialogue and literature review.

- **Eddie Atherton, Owensboro**

During his 24 years of service in the city of Owensboro, Eddie Atherton has been involved with the beautification of the original Smothers Park in the early 1980s and currently the riverfront revitalization. To ensure that the distinguished "Tree City USA" designation is upheld, he plants hundreds of trees in the city parks and on other city properties. Other projects include the Greenbelt, Frederica Street Island Improvements and various other city medians and rights of way. He has proven to be an effective manager of the grounds of Owensboro.

- **Banklick Watershed Council Inc., Covington**

The Banklick Watershed Council Inc. is comprised of volunteers whose mission is to restore, protect and promote Banklick Creek and its watershed. There are 12 different local jurisdictions within the boundary of the Banklick Watershed. The council works in partnership with Planning and Development Services of Kenton County, the Northern Kentucky Health Department and Sanitation District No.1.

- **Cayley Crum, Louisville**

As a cadet-level girl scout, Cayley Crum, now 15, decided to start a project called Re-Tree Shively, officially founded in February 2013. Cayley's goal was to plant and tag 115 trees including 32 different native tree species on Arbor Day. Working closely with her mother, they developed relationships with Shively's businesses, organizations, residents and city agencies, raising more than \$10,000 to pay for the trees. Cayley's overall goals are to help decrease Shively's heat index, improve air quality, and beautify the parks.

- **Elizabeth Schmitz, Frankfort**

Elizabeth Schmitz's energy and environmental education installation at the Capitol Education Center, developed under the direction of Kentucky First Lady Jane Beshear, is raising awareness of how personal actions affect the environment. The Capitol Education Center is dedicated to environmental sustainability and civic engagement. The center hosts more than 60,000 students and adults annually. In 2002, Elizabeth also spearheaded Bowling Green's first producer-only farmer's market. She is now executive director of the Kentucky Environmental Education Council.

- **Public Service Award - Floyd County Conservation District**

The Floyd County Conservation District's goal is to help the community gain a better understanding of our natural resources. It is a holistic education program for residents of Floyd County, offering workshops on fruit trees, hay, and pasture maintenance and development. The district provides a work-based learning location for the Carl D. Perkins Job Corps Center, where participants are able to gain a better understanding of environmental and agricultural issues.

- **Lifetime Achievement Award - Joyce Bender, Frankfort**

Joyce Bender is the first and only manager of Kentucky's nature preserves. Since 1986 the state nature preserves system has grown from 16 preserves totaling 5,703 acres to 63 preserves, encompassing 27,663 acres. Her coordinated efforts and partnership development, along with volunteers and local officials, have minimized damage to the preserves in the wake of dumping, timber theft, off-road vehicles and illegal marijuana growing operations.

For additional information on the awardees, contact Arnita Gadson at 502-564-2674 or visit the commission's website at <http://eqc.ky.gov/Pages/default.aspx>.

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